

REMARKS

The Office Action dated August 24, 2004, has been received and carefully noted. The amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 1-2, 5, and 9 have been amended, and claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants submit that the amendments made herein are fully supported in the specification and the drawings as originally filed, and therefore no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-2, 5, 9, 11, and 27-28 are pending in the present application and have been placed in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of this application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3, 5, 9, and 11 of the present application. Claim 1 has been amended to include at least the allowable subject matter in claim 3. Similarly, claim 2 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter in claim 3. Claim 9 has been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of base claim 2. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 2 and 9 are allowable.

Claim 5 has been amended to reflect the proper dependency of allowable claim 2. Claim 11 depends on allowable claim 9, and claims 27 and 28 depend from allowable claim 2. Therefore, claims 5, 11, 27 and 28 are also allowable.

Accordingly, claims 1-2, 5, 9, 11, and 27-28 have been placed in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of this application.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 27 and 28 Now Moot

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iyer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,130,579, "Iyer") in view of Segal (U.S. Patent No. 4,555,672, "Segal"). Furthermore, claims 2, and 27-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iyer in view of Segal and Ishikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,982,236, "Ishikawa").

As mentioned above, the claims of the present application have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter indicated in the outstanding Office Action dated August 24, 2004. Hence, Applicants submit that the rejections based on the cited prior art is now moot.

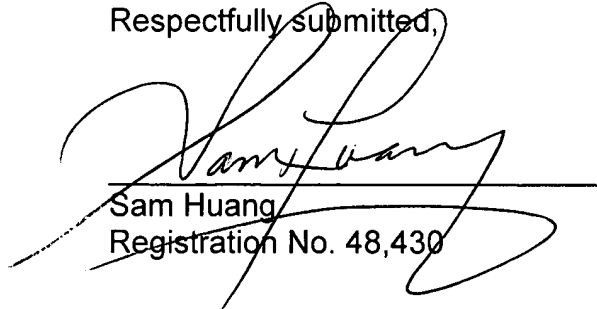
Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 1-2, 5, 9, 11, and 27-28 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Applicants also submit that the subject matter is more than sufficient to render the claims non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, and therefore respectfully request that claims 1-2, 5, 9, 11, and 27-28 be found allowable and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper has not been timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing Attorney Docket No. 108391-00020.

Respectfully submitted,



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